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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A network game system for playing a game with the aim of achieving a predetermined goal of the game, said game being played, via monitor-equipped data terminals operated by member players, in a game space simulating a virtual company provided on a game server, while in communication with the game server on a network, said system comprising:

question generating means for generating questions as an employment test in response to access from the monitor-equipped data terminal of a non-member player;

transmitting/receiving means for transmitting and receiving data to and from the monitor-equipped data terminals including transmitting the questions generated by the question generating means to the monitor-equipped data terminal of the non-member player via the network and receiving information from the non-member player in response to the questions via the network;

character-training process means for evaluating if the non-member player is qualified as an employee of the virtual company based on the information sent back by the non-member player via the network;

recruiting information generating means for generating, upon receipt from a member player of referral information specifying a mail address of a data terminal

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of a non-member player, recruiting information including information specifying the member player, the recruiting information being sent to the non-member player via the transmitting/receiving means;

enrollment processing means for performing different enrollment processing upon receiving application information from the non-member player depending on whether the application information is received from the non-member player in response to the recruiting information sent to the mail address of said non-member player, the enrollment processing means performing enrollment processing without the employment test being arranged to consider the employment test passed only upon receipt of application information from a non-member player in response to the recruiting information sent to the mail address of the non-member and, when the non-member player provides application information not in response to recruiting information, the enrollment processing means performing enrollment processing with the employment test and determining whether the non-member player passes or fails the employment test; and

advantage conferring means for conferring to the referring member player advantages useful in achieving the goal in the game.

2. (Canceled).

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3. (Previously Presented) The network game system according to claim 1, further comprising report generating means for generating a report informing the referring member player that the non-member referred by him or her has enrolled.

4. (Previously Presented) The network game system according to claim 1, wherein the goal of said game is for a score representing a number of points accumulated in the course of game play to reach a predetermined value, and said advantage conferring means adds a predetermined number of points to the member player's score.

5. (Previously Presented) The network game system according to claim 1, wherein said game is a character-training game in which virtual employees associated with data terminals are trained, aiming at becoming president of said virtual company.

6. (Previously Presented) The network game system according to claim 5, wherein said game server comprises:

question generating means for generating a predetermined number of question sessions, said sessions being shown at predetermined intervals on data terminal monitors;

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transmitting/receiving means for transmitting a generated question to a data terminal and for receiving from a data terminal response data in response to the question shown on the data terminal monitor;

a parameter storage portion for storing said response data in association with an increment/decrement parameter value required for character-training;

a personal data storage portion for storing at least a parameter value updatable with reference to information that identifies an employee; and

character-training processing means for adding to a current parameter value said increment/decrement parameter value determined from the content of response data to a question, storing the result in said personal data storage portion for each virtual employee, and on the basis of this parameter value, performing a process to promote or demote within the virtual company the virtual employee associated with said data terminal.

7. (Previously Presented) The network game system according to claim 6, further comprising game play processing means allowing a player to select any of a plurality of game modes, wherein said parameter storage portion has increment/decrement parameter values set for the respective different game modes.

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8. (Previously Presented) The network game system according to claim 5, wherein said question generating means poses a predetermined question when accessed from a data terminal.

9. (Currently Amended) A network game play processing method for proceeding a game with the aim of achieving a predetermined goal of the game, said game being played, via monitor-equipped data terminals operated by member players, in a game space simulating a virtual company provided on a game server, while in communication with said game server on a network, said method comprising the steps of:

generating questions as an employment test in response to access from the monitor-equipped data terminal of a non-member player;

transmitting the generated questions to the monitor-equipped data terminal of the non-member player via the network;

receiving information from the non-member player in response to the questions via the network;

evaluating if the non-member player is qualified as an employee of the virtual company based on the information sent back by the non-member player via the network;

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generating recruiting information including information specifying a member player, in the event that said game server receives from said member player referral information specifying a mail address of a data terminal of a non-member player;

transmitting the recruiting information to the non-member player;

performing different enrollment processing upon receiving application information from the non-member player depending on whether the application information is received from the non-member player in response to the recruiting information sent to the mail address of the non-member player, said enrollment processing step comprising the steps of performing enrollment processing without the employment test considering the employment test passed only upon receipt of application information from a non-member player in response to the recruiting information sent to the mail address of the non-member and performing enrollment processing with the employment test when the non-member player provides application information not in response to recruiting information to determine whether the non-member player passes or fails the employment test; and

conferring to the referring member player advantages useful in achieving the goal in the game.

10. (Canceled)

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11. (Previously Presented) The network game play processing method according to claim 9, wherein a report informing the referring member player that a non-member referred by him or her has enrolled is generated and sent to the referring member player.

12. (Previously Presented) The network game play processing method according to claim 9, wherein the goal of said game is for a score presenting a number of points accumulated in the course of game play to reach a predetermined value, and said useful advantage is the addition of a predetermined number of points to the member player's score.

13. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium for storing a network game play processing program for playing a game with the aim of achieving a predetermined goal of the game, said game being played, via monitor-equipped data terminals operated by member players, in a game space simulating a virtual company provided on a game server, while in communication with said game server on a network, said network game play processing program comprising the steps of:

generating questions as an employment test in response to access from the monitor-equipped data terminal of a non-member player;

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transmitting the generated questions to the monitor-equipped data terminal of the non-member player via the network;

receiving information from the non-member player in response to the questions via the network;

evaluating if the non-member player is qualified as an employee of the virtual company based on the information sent back by the non-member player via the network;

generating recruiting information including information specifying a member player, in the event that said game server receives from said member player referral information specifying the mail address of the data terminal of a non-member player;

transmitting the recruiting information to the non-member player;

performing different enrollment processing upon receiving application information from the non-member player depending on whether the application information is received from the non-member player in response to the recruiting information sent to the mail address of the non-member player, said enrollment processing step comprising the steps of performing enrollment processing without the employment test considering the employment test passed only upon receipt of application information from a non-member player in response to the recruiting information sent to the mail address of the non-member and performing enrollment processing with the employment test when the non-member player provides

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application information not in response to recruiting information to determine
whether the non-member player passes or fails the employment test; and
conferring to the referring member player advantages useful in achieving the
goal in the game.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium
for storing a network game play program according to claim 13, wherein a report
informing the referring member player that a non-member referred by him or her has
enrolled is generated and sent to the referring member player.

16. (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium
for storing a network game play program according to claim 13, wherein the goal of
said game is for a score representing a number of points accumulated in the course
of game play to reach a predetermined value, and said useful advantage is the
addition of a predetermined number of points to the member player's score.

17. (Previously Presented) The network game system according to claim
1, wherein the referral information includes a message from the member-player to the
non-member player and the recruiting information includes the message.

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18. (Previously Presented) The network game system according to claim 1, wherein the recruiting information generating means are arranged to generate recruiting information including the member player's virtual company and position.

19. (Previously Presented) The network game system according to claim 1, wherein the recruiting information generating means are arranged to generate recruiting information including a URL address for jumping to the network game system.

20. (Currently Amended) A network game system for playing a game with the aim of achieving a predetermined goal of the game, said game being played, via monitor-equipped data terminals operated by member players, in a game space simulating a virtual company provided on a game server, while in communication with the game server on a network, said system comprising:

a company data storage portion for storing data relating to a plurality of virtual companies;

transmitting/receiving means for transmitting data from the game server to the monitor-equipped data terminal of a non-member player via the network;

a game play processing portion for reading the company data from the company data storage portion and transmitting the data to the monitor-equipped data

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terminal of the non-member player and allowing a selection of one of the companies by the non-member player;

recruiting information generating means for generating, upon receipt from a member player of referral information specifying a mail address of a data terminal of a non-member player, recruiting information including information specifying the member player, the recruiting information being sent to the non-member player via the transmitting/receiving means;

enrollment processing means for performing enrollment processing upon receiving application information from the non-member player in response to the recruiting information sent to the mail address of the non-member player; [[and]]

advantage conferring means for conferring to the referring member player advantages useful in achieving the goal in the game; and

question generating means for generating questions as an employment test in response to access from the monitor-equipped data terminal of a non-member player, the enrollment processing means being arranged to perform enrollment processing upon receiving application information from the non-member player depending on whether the application information is received from the non-member player in response to the recruiting information sent to the mail address of said non-member player, said enrollment processing being to consider the employment test passed only upon receipt of application information from a non-member player in response to recruiting information sent to the mail address of the non-member and, when the non-

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member player provides application information not in response to recruiting information, the enrollment processing means being arranged to perform enrollment processing with the employment test and determine whether the non-member player passes or fails the employment test.

21. (Previously Presented) The game system according to claim 20, wherein the company data storage portion stores a plurality of virtual company data comprising various categories of businesses and includes as virtual company data, the name of the president, total assets, number of employees and ratings indicating a popularity index and trust.

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)